

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 052339Z MAR 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3457

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON'S VISIT TO MEXICO

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1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER YIGAL ALLON
HANDLED HIMSELF WELL, HIS VISIT TO MEXICO FEB. 29 TO
MARCH 5 WILL NOT GO DOWN AS PUBLIC RELATIONS OR DIPLOMATIC
SUCCESS. AGREEMENTS TO SUTDY BILATERAL COOPERATION IN CHEMICAL,
AGRICULTURAL, ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES WERE OVERSHADOWED BY
"AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE" ON MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICAL
ISSUES DURING ALLON'S MEETINGS WITH MEXICAN FOREIGN SECRETARY
ALFONSO GARCIA ROBLES. THEIR EXCHANGES WERE CHARACTERIZED
BY FRANKNESS, BARE MINIMUM OF DIPLOMATIC NICETIES AND
FREQUENT CLASHES OF VIEWS WHICH THREATENED TO DISRUPT
THEIR MEETINGS. OVERALL, IT APPEARS THAT ONLY THING
ALLON WILL HAVE TO SHOW FOR POLITICAL RISK HE
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TOOK IN COMING HERE IS HIS STOUT DEFENSE OF ISRAELI VIEWS.

END SUMMARY.

2. AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE: FONSEC GARCIA ROBLES MADE IT CLEAR THAT GOM INTENDED TO KEEP ITS DISTANCE FROM ISRAEL IN HIS LUNCHEON SPEECH MARCH 2. MEXICO'S DETERMINATION, HE SAID, TO TAKE POSITIONS BASED ON INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF WHAT WILL BEST CONTRIBUTE TO AND STRENGTHEN JUST PEACE, "INEVITABLY MEANS THAT, AS HAS OCCURRED AT TIMES IN PAST, OCCASIONS WILL ARISE IN WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, WE (I.E. ISRAEL AND MEXICO) HAVE HONEST DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. NEVERTHELESS, I HOLD CONVICTION THAT RECOGNITION OF THIS REALITY SHOULD NOT UPSET US, BECAUSE BETWEEN EQUALS THERE CAN BE NO INJURY WHEN ONE OR OTHER EXERCISES ITS INALIENABLE RIGHT TO TAKE POSITION AND ARRIVE AT DIFFERENT CONCLUSION.Z

3. ALTHOUGH ALLON PRESENTED ISRAEL'S VIEWS FORCEFULLY AND ARTICULATELY, HE WAS OBVIOUSLY INCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE OPEN CLASH OF OPINIONS WITH HIS HOST GARCIA ROBLES. ALLON MADE HIS DISCOMFORT KNOWN DURING JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE ON MARCH 3: "I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT IT IS USUALLY EASIER FOR GOVERNMENTS TO SOLVE FOREIGN PROBLEMS RATHER THAN THEIR OWN...WE DO NOT NEED ADVICE. WE KNOW WHAT WE SHOULD DO IN ORDER TO RESOLVE PROBLEM BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES."

4. ONE OF MAJOR CLASHES DURING PRESS CONFERENCE OCCURRED OVER TWO MINISTERS' VIEWS ON PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. ALLON NOTED THAT PLO IS TERRORIST ORGANIZATION WHICH TAKES EXTREMIST POSITIONS, CALLS FOR DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL AS STATE, AND OPPOSES MODERATION ON MIDDLE EASTERN PROBLEMS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GOM WOULD RECONSIDER ITS DECISION TO ALLOW PLO TO OPEN OFFICE IN MEXICO CITY. ALLON ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MAJORITY OF LAND AND PEOPLE IN JORDAN ARE PALESTINIAN AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND NEGOTIATE WITH JORDAN AND MODERATE PALESTINIANS BUT NOT WITH PLO. GARCIA ROBLES SAID THAT MEXICO WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FULFILL PROMISE MADE BY ECHEVERRIA TO ALLOW PLO TO OPEN OFFICE HERE (WITHOUT SAYING WHEN THIS WOULD OCCUR). HE ALSO SAID THAT IN OPINION OF GOM, OPENING OF PLO OFFICE HERE "WOULD NOT MEAN AN INCREASE IN DANGER EITHER FOR ISRAEL OR FOR EVOLUTION TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF MIDDLE EASTERN QUESTION".

5. ANOTHER SERIOUS DIFFERENCE OF VIEWPOINTS OCCURRED WHEN GARCIA ROBLES AND ALLON PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS ON MEANING OF UN RESOLUTION 242. ALLON MAINTAINED THAT ONLY VALID VERSION OF RESOLUTION 242 WAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION WHICH REFERS TO RETURN OF "OCCUPIED TERRITORY". REPORTED NOTED THAT SPANISH VERSION SAYS "THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES" AND THAT THIS HAD BEEN INTERPRETATED MORE BROADLY. GARCIA ROBLES CONFIRMED THAT GOM PINTERPRETS IT BROADLY: "FOR MEXICO THE PHRASE 'THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES' IS INDEED SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE THE RESOLUTION IS WORDED THIS WAY IN SPANISH, AND FIVE AUTHORIZED LANGUAGES OF UN HAVE EQUAL VALIDITY FOR MEXICO." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT BEFORE SECURITY COUNCIL VOTED ON THIS RESOLUTION, THE PRESIDENT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BLOC IN THE UN, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WAS ASKED WHETHER THIS PHRASE MEANT ALL THE TERRITORIES AND HE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. "THIS", HE CONCLUDED, "IS THE REASON FOR OUR INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242."

6. ALLON WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF "AUTOMATIC MAJORITY" IN UN. HE NOTED THAT HIS COUNTRY COULD NOT OFFER PETROLEUM OR MONEY OR UN VOTES IN EXCHANGE FOR OTHER VOTES FAVORABLE TO ISRAELI POSITIONS. "WE THINK", HE SAID, "THAT IF WE OURSELVES (IN THE MIDDLE EAST) COULD SOLVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS IT WOULD BE MUCH EASIER AND THIS (NON-INTERFERENCE) WOULD BE A GREAT HELP TO US ON THE PART OF THE THIRD WORLD."

7. WITH RESPECT TO EVENTS FOLLOWING THE UNGA VOTE NOV. 10, 1975, ALLON HAD SOME WARM WORDS FOR MEXICO: "AFTER MEXICO CLARIFIED ITS VOTE AGAINST ZIONISM IN THE UN, THE MEXICAN DELEGATION HAS NOT RESUMED SUPPORT FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE THESIS THAT ZIONISM IS RACISM, AND THIS IS ENCOURAGING." IN DISCUSSING FORMER FONSECA RABASA'S VISIT TO ISRAEL LAST DEC, ALLON STATED THAT "RABASA NEVER APOLOGIZED OR ASKED FOR PARDON. HE ONLY FULFILLED HIS MISSION WHICH CONSISTED OF CLARIFYING THE POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND REPRESENTING MEXICO IN MANNER THAT MEXICANS SHOULD BE SATISFIED WITH." ALLON ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE ONLY GOI RESPONSE TO MEXICAN VOTE WAS TO SEND NOTE OF PROTEST AND THAT TOURISM BOYCOTT OF MEXICO BY THE US JEWISH COMMUNITY WAS SOMETHING BEYOND THE GOI'S CONTROL. GARCIA ROBLES' ONLY COMMENT ON THE MATTER WAS THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN A SUBJECT COVERED IN HIS PRIVATE TALKS WITH ALLON.

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8. IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S QUESTION ON WHETHER MEXICO WANTED TO MEDIATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS, GARCIA ROBERS SAID: "I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE THAT WE SOUGHT THIS MEDIATION (ROLE) AT ANY TIME. WHAT IS WELL KNOWN, AND AS PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HAS SAID, IS THAT MEXICO IS READY, AND WE WOULD FIND IT A SOURCE OF SATISFACTION IF WE WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING A PEACE BASED ON JUSTICE."

9 ONE PRESS ACCOUNT INDICATES THAT THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE ENDED ON A SOMEWHAT STRAINED NOTE WITH ALLON AND GARCIA ROBLES COOLLY TAKING LEAVE OF EACH OTHER.

10. BILATERAL ISSUES: ALTHOUGH THE TWO GOVERNMENTS PROMISED TO STUDY POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC COOPERATION, NO CONCRETE AGREEMENTS WERE CONCLUDED. IN FACT, THE ARAVA AIRCRAFT ASSEMBLY PLANT (PARA 3 OF REC C) WAS
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NOT EVEN MENTIONED AS ONE OF THESE. EVEN THE GOM'S GESTURES SEEMED TO FALL FLAT, POSSIBLY BY DESIGN, POSSIBLY NOT. FOR EXAMPLE, ALLON'S ADDRESS TO MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA BOTH WERE ONLY SPARSELY AND SPOTTILY COVERED IN THE PRESS (IN CONTRAST TO THE FRONT PAGE AND EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF HIS MEETINGS AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH GARCIA ROBLES).

11. ALLON'S ITINERARY: ALLON, WHO LEFT MEXICO CITY MARCH 3 TO GO TO THE YUCATAN PENINSULA AND VISIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, RETURNED HERE THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 4 AND MET WITH LOCAL JEWISH LEADERS THE SAME EVENING. IN A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, AN ISRAELI DIPLOMAT EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE GOM'S TREATMENT OF ALLON AND SAID HE (ALLON) WILL NOT MEET WITH GOM OFFICIALS AGAIN BEFORE HE DEPARTS MEXICO ON MARCH 5. HE WILL MAKE A BRIEF STOP IN GUATEMALA AND THEN GO ON TO SAN JOSE FOR A MEETING WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADORS SERVING IN LATIN AMERICA.

12. COMMENT: WHILE MEXICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS ARE OFFICIALLY CORRECT AND CORDIAL, THEY SEEM TO BE MORE DISTANT AND STRAINED THAN THEY HAVE BEEN FOR YEARS EXCEPT OF COURSE AT THE TIME OF THE FAMOUS ZIONIST VOTES. FOREIGN SECRETARY GARCIA ROBLES SEEMS MORE FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF FOREIGN RELATIONS THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, EMILIO RABASA, EVER WAS. ECHEVERRIA'S LOW PROFILE VIS-A-VIS THE ALLON VISIT IS, TO SAY THE LEAST, UNUSUAL. ALL OF THIS MAY BE AN INDICATION OF HIS CONFIDENCE IN GARCIA ROBLES OR IT MAY BE THE RESULT OF A POLICY DECISION TO KEEP THE ISRAELIS AT ARM'S LENGTH OR BOTH.

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